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RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE BROADBAND GRANTS AWARDED

COLUMBIA, SC – July 13, 2021 – The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) has issued Notices to Proceed to 16 internet service providers in 22 counties for almost \$30 million in projects to expand broadband availability in rural areas of need in our state.

Earlier this year the Joint Bond Review Committee approved the allocation of \$30 million for a competitive rural infrastructure grant program to be administered by ORS in coordination with the South Carolina Department of Commerce, and on May 14, 2021, ORS began accepting applications for projects in eligible counties on a 1:1 matching basis.

Projects were awarded in the following counties: Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Clarendon, Chester, Chesterfield, Fairfield, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Newberry, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg.

The following companies submitted successful grant applications: Aiken Electric Cooperative, CenturyLink, Comcast, Comporium - Lancaster Telephone Company, Comporium- PBT Communications, Inc., Farmers Telephone Cooperative (FTC), Hargray, Home Telecom, Horry Telephone Cooperative (HTC), Lynches River Electric Cooperative, Newberry Electric Cooperative, Orangeburg County, Palmetto Telephone Communications, Revolution D, Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Tri-County Electric Cooperative, and TruVista.

The first construction reports are due to ORS by Oct. 15, 2021, and all projects are scheduled to be completed by October 2022.

More information can be found at ORS.SC.GOV/broadband.

ABOUT ORS: The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) represents consumers of investor-owned utilities in South Carolina before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC). The PSC is the state agency that sets utilities' rates. The ORS must look at the impact to the consumer and utilities' continued investment in reliable and high-quality services. More information can be found at ORS.SC.GOV.

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